

Report

NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY

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**NEWARK'S**

**CHILDREN**





# NEWARK'S

## FOREWORD

Who has greater need for a clean and attractive home than a child?

Because children come first in the planning of the Newark Housing Authority, this report has been devoted to them. We are presenting photographs of children in public housing, children in slums, children around town. Our purpose is to show what children do in their free time. Each reader will form his own judgment of the activities and emotions that the photographer has caught.

All of us need to look more closely at the areas where we have failed to give our children the minimum for good living. We cannot hide the failure implicit in Newark's 24,000 substandard dwellings. Until the slums are erased, many thousands of children will be deprived of a fair start in life.

Business and industry have joined with Mayor Leo P. Carlin and the Housing Authority to give Newark a new look through urban redevelopment. There must be a new look for Newark's children, too. So far the Housing Authority has built 7,385 modern apartments where more than 15,000 children live. We are resolved to keep on building.

Our heartfelt thanks for backing up our program go to Mayor Carlin and the City Council; to the newspapers of the community; to the civic leaders, and to the great mass of citizens who have steadfastly supported public housing in the long struggle against the slums.

THE REVEREND THOMAS J. FINNEGAN, *Chairman  
The Housing Authority of the City of Newark*

# CHILDREN



*Of the 28,006 persons in the 12 projects of the Newark Housing Authority, 15,319—or 54.7 percent—are children. The child population is greater than the entire population of such towns as Burlington, Gloucester, Harrison, Princeton, South Orange and Weehawken.*

*How are these 15,319 children faring? And how are all the rest of Newark's children doing? These are foremost questions for adults to ponder. To churn up some ideas, we submit to the grown citizens of Newark the following pictures and words about those who will ultimately take over the city, state and nation.*

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# PLAY



Baseball is played at Christopher Columbus Homes (above) and in cluttered backyards of the Central Ward, where the Housing Authority will soon raze four of the worst blocks and build more low-rent housing.







Sociologists have detected correlation between children's affinity for water and a rise in the thermometer level.

# ADVENTURE







# LEARNING





Beau - at left - is the only adult face in this report on Newark's children



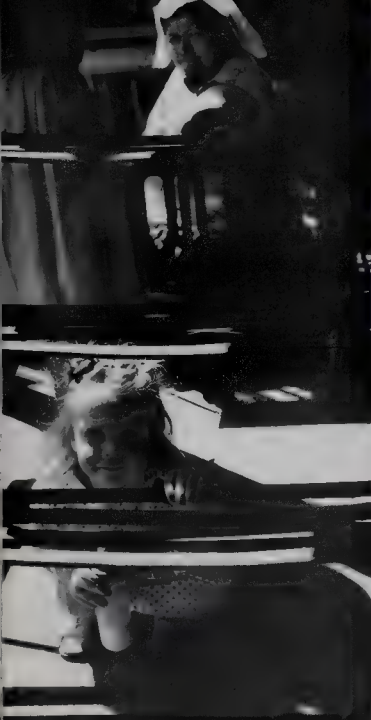


Reading in the Newark Public Library and reading in a private house.





The ballet lessons shown on pages 8 and 9 are given at Christopher Columbus Homes as part of the Housing Authority's recreation program. Recreation leaders are provided by the Board of Education.



## EATING

Children on these pages are well supplied with food and drink. Many of Newark's youngsters, however, do not get the milk, fresh fruits and vegetables that their bodies need. Their parents don't have the money.

Low-rent public housing has made a tremendous contribution to child health in Newark and elsewhere. By charging rent its families can afford, the Housing Authority makes it possible to spend more on food. This is fine for everybody, including the grocer and the farmer.



# FRIENDSHIP







Friendships spring all over, as these pictures show  
One aim of public housing is to provide houses that  
no child will ever be ashamed to bring a friend to.



# LONELINESS





# DRIFTING





It's nonsense to say that without a recreational program every child will start breaking windows and running amok. But it's fully to be expected that the poorest day school in Newark. All of the Housing Authority's playgrounds are open to all of the children in the surrounding neighborhoods.

# HOPE



What does a child hope for? Not even the child can tell for sure. Our hope is that every child in Newark will have an equal chance to live in a good house in a good neighborhood. We have a long way to go to reach that goal.



# MORE ABOUT CHILDREN

PUBLIC housing has always been the place where children are wanted. Indeed, there was a time when childless couples couldn't get into a Newark Housing Authority project because all of the vacancies were being taken by families with children.

The 15,319 children in Newark's public housing today are more than the entire population of the city in 1830 (10,953) and close to the 1840 population of 17,290. The number in each age group is:

|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Under 7 years . . . . | 7,122  |
| 7 through 11 . . . .  | 4,297  |
| 12 through 16 . . . . | 2,948  |
| 17 through 20 . . . . | 952    |
|                       | 15,319 |

There are 7,514 girls and 7,805 boys. Why there is a plurality of almost 300 boys we haven't the faintest idea.

Of the 7,148 families in public housing projects, 1,581—or 22 percent—have been broken by death or separation. About one child out of every four lives in a broken home.

In any group of 15,000 children (or adults) there will be a large percentage with problems and a small percentage with very serious problems. The Housing Authority does not reject potentially troublesome children and take only those who can be expected to behave. Our policy is to accept every family who qualifies on the basis of income, citizenship and housing conditions.

If children become disturbers of peace and property, help is sought from public and private agencies. Medical, psychiatric or other assistance usually takes care of the problem. Eviction is the last resort in hopeless cases. The point to keep in mind is that public housing brings help to families who desperately need it. In the slums many a family rots while its problems fester, unattended.

What does it mean to 15,319 children to live in public housing? One plain fact is that a number will live who would otherwise die. Slums sap the vitality of men and women, and especially of children. More than ten years ago the Housing Authority made a statistical comparison of the populations of three wards with bad housing and of three public housing projects. The study produced these data for 1943:



1. The infant mortality rate was 42.4 per 1,000 births in the slums, 16.3 in the projects.

2. The communicable disease rate was 231 per 1,000 children under 15 in the slums, 91.9 in the projects.

3. The tuberculosis morbidity rate was 64.6 per 10,000 persons of 15 to 40 years in the slums, 24.3 in the projects.

4. The fatal home accident rate was 2.5 per 10,000 persons in the slums, zero in the projects.

5. The dwelling fire rate was 28.4 per 10,000 persons in the entire city, 8.8 in the Authority's projects.

In short, children have a better chance in clean, airy, sunlit public housing, with facilities for recreation both indoors and outdoors. We don't mean that all the problems of human existence can be washed away with hot water and soap—but it certainly helps to have modern plumbing, modern refrigeration, modern heating.

## NEW PROJECTS

The Housing Authority is now laying siege to the worst slum area in Newark. In the old Third Ward there are blocks of dwellings which look, smell and crumble like the ancient tenements of New York's lower East Side. This 70-block area of blight is bounded on the east by High Street, on the west by Belmont Avenue, on the north by Springfield Avenue and on the south by Avon Avenue.

In these blocks are 6,000 of Newark's 24,000 substandard dwellings.

The Housing Authority's first step will be to build 1,206 low-rent dwellings on the 4-block site bounded by Prince, Montgomery and Barclay Streets and Waverly Avenue. Land is now being acquired and the new project is scheduled for opening in 1959. When these apartments become available to families in the surrounding slums, more bad housing can be razed.

Ultimately the entire 70 blocks will be razed or renovated. Land will be provided for more low-rent housing, parks, playgrounds, schools, middle-income housing and a north-south expressway.

Newark's first redevelopment projects, comprising 231½ acres north of the Lackawanna Railroad tracks, are now taking firm shape. The Redevelopment Corporation of New Jersey successfully bid \$1,000,000 for the two cleared sites in May 1957. Plans call for a \$21,000,000 development consisting of 14-story apartment buildings with 1,160 apart-

ments renting for about \$85 a room, plus a 14-story office building on Broad Street and other commercial structures. The new apartments will be the first new housing built in downtown Newark for many years.

Penn Plaza, the main gateway to Newark, is a predominantly shabby section of rundown commercial buildings, helter-skelter parking lots and scattered slums. There have been some signs of rejuvenation (notably the conversion of the old city market into the State Office Building) but there should be a wholesale rebuilding of the 70 acres bounded by the Pennsylvania and Jersey Central tracks, Mulberry Street and the Passaic River. Federal aid is essential, but federal aid is now barred because redevelopment would not involve housing. What we need is an amendment to the redevelopment law giving a community the right to determine the type of redevelopment project that is most important to it. If a commercial area in a vital location ought to be rebuilt for commercial use, federal aid should be granted—just as it now is when a slum area is rebuilt for commercial use.

The crucial and continuing shortage of middle-income housing remains unsolved. Legislation now pending in the state legislature would give local housing authorities the right to build unsubsidized housing for middle-income families, with the approval of the municipal government. The required 10 percent equity could come from a variety of sources: federal, state or local governments; foundations, or labor unions. The remaining 90 percent would be available through FHA underwriting of Housing Authority mortgage bonds.

Another urgent need is good housing for elderly citizens. The Housing Authority is applying for federal approval of 500 low-rent dwellings to be built for aged persons on presently owned land in five projects and on land to be purchased at a sixth project.

We are making progress. But there is a vast amount of building to be done before we can tear down the last slum and see that every Newark family has a chance to live properly, healthfully and happily.

## P. S. — ABOUT TAXES

Contrary to the general notion that public housing pays no taxes, the Newark Housing Authority is making a payment of \$279,349 this year toward the cost of municipal services supplied to its tenants and property in 1956. These payments in lieu of taxes are made each year, as provided by law. The city actually collects more revenue per family in public housing than per family in typical slums.

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